(d) if answer to part (b) above be in the negative the reasons therefor; and

(e) what steps are proposed to be taken to boost up the sagging exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEAGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) As per the available provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercal Intelligence & Statistics (DGGI&S), during April—December, 1998-99 exports registered a growth of 11.7% in rupee terms and a decline of 2.9% in dollar terms. The deceleration of exports is mainly due to South East Asian crisis and world wide recession.

(e) Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing an export friendly environment, Involvement of States in export promotion and consultation with trade and industry. A number of steps have been taken to promote exports which include lowering of interest rates on export credit, reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation and simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and billateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. The Government is also initiating action through several measures to facilitate investment in sectors with strong export potential, encourage diversification of India's export basket, address Infrastructure short comings, imporve export facilitation measures and thus enhanace the overall competitiveness of Indian exports. The Government is according high priority to exports and all necessary steps are being taken to put exports on high gorwth trajectory.

Steps to encourage Exports From The North-Eastern Region

654. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on commerce, in its 36th Report on development potential of Commerce in the NER have recommended to establish an EPZ preferably in or around Guwahati with Government funds to encourage export from the region;

(b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by Government to implement the aforesaid recommendation of the Committee;

(c) the budgetary allocation made, if any; and

(d) the target fixed for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The proposal for setting up of an EPZ in the North Easterm region with central assistance was considered in consultation with the Planning Commission. On the advice of the Planning Commission, it has been decided to explore the feasibility of converting the sanctioned Export Promotion Industrial Park (EPIP) in Assam located near Guwahati into an EPZ for the North Eastern region. The State Government has been requested to communicate its views in the matter.

Target set for Export of Mangoes.

655. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any target has been set for mango exports during the forthcoming season;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to construct/arrange special refrigerators to export at least 20 tonnes in one container to boost exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No. Sir.

(c) The Government has no plans to construct/arrange special refrigerators to export atleast 20 tonnes in one container for mango exports. However, the Agricultural and processed Food Products Export Development Authority, APEDA, in association with the State Government agencies and leading exporters, has initiated experiments for undertaking trail shipment of managoes through Controlled Atmosphere(CA) container from selected regions for selected varieties having export potential. The success of this experiement is expected to help in enhacing the shelf life, quality of the product and its international competitiveness and thereby contribute to enhancement of export of mangoes.

Gas Cracker unit at Tengakhat, Assam

656. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how many months have remained to build the Gas Cracker unit at Tengakhat, Assam as per agreement with the Reliance Company;

(b) what is the progress made till now;

(c) whether it would be commissioned in time; and

(d) the amount paid to the Reliance company for this purpose by Government?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (d) The proposed Gas Cracker unit at Tengakhat, Assam is being implemented by Reliance Assam Petro-chmeicals Ltd. (RAPL), a joint venture between Assam Industrial Development Corporation and Reliance Industries Ltd.

The Government of Assam have identified 1262 acress of land out of which 144 acres have been handed over so far to RAPL. A number of steps have been taken for finalising the Gas Supply Agreement including identification of the source of the feed-stocks, discussions on transfer price of an existing gas separation plant at Lakwa and recruitment of personnel. The project has a target date of commission in 44 months from the date of signing of Gas Supply Agreement between RAPL and OIL India Ltd. and handing over of the entire land required for the project.

The Goverment of India has not made any payments so far for the project.

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों की उत्पादन क्षमता

657. **श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक:** क्या उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के अधिकांश उपक्रमों की उत्पादन क्षमता में कमी आई है और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र का घाटा बढ़ा है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसका ब्यौरा क्या है; और सरकार ने सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों की कार्यक्षमता और मुनाफा बढ़ाने हेतु क्या प्रभावी कदम उठाये हैं?

उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सुखबीर सिंह बादल): (क) और (ख) जी, नहीं। सरकारी क्षेत्र के उत्पादन कारी तथा विनिर्माण कारी उपक्रमों की उत्पादन क्षमता में गत वर्ष की तुलना में वर्ष 1997-98 के दौरान कोई खास अन्तर नहीं आया है।

वर्ष 1997-98 के दौरान सरकारी क्षेत्र के उद्यमों ने कुल मिलाकर 13725.23 करोड़ रुपए का लाभ अर्जित किया है, जबकि वर्ष 1996-97 के दौरान 9991.82 करोड़ रुपए का लाभ हुआ था। लाभ अर्जित करने वाली कम्पनियों का लाभ 1996-97 के 16112.93 करोड़ रुपए से बढ़कर 1997-98 के दौरान 20266.99 करोड़ रुपए हो गया। वर्ष 1997-98 के दौरान घाटा उठाने वाली कम्पनियों ने 6541.46 करोड़ रुपए का घाटा उठाया, जबकि गत वर्ष के दौरान 6117.41 करोड़ रुपए का घाटा उठाया था।